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C O N F I D E N T I A L VATICAN 001674

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/WE (MENNU TI)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/02/2012

TAGS: [IS PHUM PREL PHUM PREL VT VTIS](#)

SUBJECT: VATICAN'S GROWING CONCERN WITH MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR JIM NICHOLSON FOR REASONS 1.5 (A) AND (D).

1.(C) FOREIGN MINISTER TAURAN CONVOKED AMBASSADOR NICHOLSON TODAY, APRIL 3 AND PRESENTED A NOTE VERBALE (FAXED TO EUR/WE). TAURAN SAID THAT THE "ARAB STREETS ARE BOILING", ESPECIALLY IN CAIRO AND JORDAN. THE VATICAN FEARS TERRORIST ATTACKS AROUND THE WORLD AND A PETROLEUM CRISIS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER STRESSED THAT ISRAEL HAS A RIGHT TO PROVIDE SECURITY
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PAGE 02 VATICA 01674 050925Z
FOR ITS PEOPLE, BUT ITS CURRENT ACTIONS ARE DISPROPORTIONATE. HE REMARKED THAT HE FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE ISRAELIS DON'T REALIZE THE IMPACT THE TELEVISION IMAGES OF THEIR ATTACKS ARE HAVING ON THE ARAB WORLD. TAURAN AGAIN CALLED FOR "PEACEMAKERS" ON THE SPOT, ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE THERE ARE NO FRONT LINES TO SEPARATE.

2.(C) THE AMBASSADOR AND TAURAN ALSO DISCUSSED THE CURRENT SITUATION OF A CONVENT OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT BRIDGET IN BETHLEHEM. IT IS CURRENTLY BEING OCCUPIED BY PALESTINIAN GUNMEN WHO ARE USING THE NUNS AS HUMAN SHIELDS. IN ADDITION TO SEVEN NUNS OF DIVERSE NATIONALITY (INCLUDING AN AMCIT) THERE ARE 200 PEOPLE WHO HAVE SOUGHT REFUGE IN THE CONVENT. TAURAN SAID THAT HE SPOKE WITH THE ISRAELI DCM YESTERDAY TO URGE THE ISRAELIS NOT TO SHELL THE CONVENT (SAINT MARY'S HOUSE), AS IT WOULD TURN INTO A MASSACRE. HE ALSO REQUESTED OUR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING ACCESS FOR THE RED CROSS TO DELIVER FOOD, WHICH HE SAYS IS CURRENTLY BEING DENIED BY ISRAEL. NICHOLSON

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PAGE 01 VATICA 01674 040657Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	VCE-00	NEA-00	DCP-01
	NSAE-00	SSO-00	SS-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	SAS-00	/003W

-----7ECDEB 040658Z /38

O 040609Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

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